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LETTER DATED 3 SEPTEMBER 1997 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a statement issued in Brazzaville by the Government of the Republic of the Congo on 27 August 1997.

I should be grateful if you would have it issued as a Security Council document.

(Signed) Daniel ABIBI

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Annex

Statement made on 27 August 1997 by the Government of the Republic of the Congo

1. Since 5 June 1997, the Congolese Government has been seeking to defend national democratic institutions against determined efforts by the former dictator, Mr. Sassou-Nguesso, and his overarmed and drug-addicted militias, the "Cobras", to overthrow the legally constituted authorities.

2. This armed rebellion, which began one month before 27 July 1997, the date scheduled for presidential elections, has already claimed over 7,000 lives in Brazzaville, has displaced a number of people, and has caused many casualties and major destruction of public buildings.

3. Mr. Sassou-Nguesso's militias, made up essentially of mercenaries recruited from among former members of the Rwandese and Zairian armed forces, are holding the inhabitants of the northern districts of Brazzaville hostage, and are using certain public buildings as bases from which to shell positions of the Congolese Armed Forces.

4. In the light of this state of destruction, the President of the Republic, the guarantor of national unity, and the Congolese Armed Forces, the guarantor of order and security, are using all necessary means to stop the threat to the State.

5. At the same time, the Government remains committed to the dynamics of the negotiations undertaken in Libreville through the mediation of the President of Gabon, El Hadj Omar Bongo, and the Mayor of Brazzaville, Mr. Bernard Kolelas, with a view to finding a solution to the crisis.

6. The Congolese Government also remains open to any other initiative aimed at encouraging a peaceful settlement in the Congo. It is in that spirit that the head of State, Professor Pascal Lissouba, supports the mediation proposal by President Laurent-Désiré Kabila, and his intention to send an inter-African peacekeeping force with the cooperation of the other countries of central and eastern Africa.

7. The Congolese Government would like to state that it is surprised at the indifference on the part of the international community, particularly in Africa, to the tragedy of the Congolese people. It is also surprised at the international community's procrastination regarding the sending of an inter-position and peacekeeping force, at a time when the situation on the ground affecting the population of Brazzaville is extremely worrying and nearly catastrophic.

8. Information available to the Government of the Republic suggests that pressure is being brought to bear by lobbyists close to Mr. Sassou-Nguesso against the ELF company in Paris, aimed at forcing the company to put a financial squeeze on the Republic of the Congo and hamper petroleum production,

so that the Government would no longer be able to meet its obligations and commitments.

9. The same lobbyists, in complicity with individuals from the Congolese Labour Party of Mr. Sassou-Nguesso, are apparently trying to spirit mercenaries into Pointe-Noire, the economic capital of the Republic of the Congo, with the aim of sabotaging foreign petroleum interests (French, American, Italian, etc.). Such terrorist actions are designed to provoke reactions against the Congolese Government in the countries where those companies are based.

10. The Government of the Republic would like to reassure its partners that it will not shirk its duty to provide for the protection, safety and security of people and property in Congolese territory, as stipulated in the Constitution. Accordingly, it will spare no effort to prevent and put an end to terrorist and belligerent acts by Mr. Sassou-Nguesso.

11. The Congolese Government urges the international community to support it in its struggle to defend democracy, achieve peace and combat international terrorism.

12. The Congolese Government reiterates its firm commitment to continue the democratic process initiated by the sovereign national conference in 1991, and to organize presidential elections in conditions of peace, security and transparency.